

Week Ending Friday, May 11, 2001

The President's Radio Address

May 5, 2001

Good morning. Today I want to offer a special greeting to everyone celebrating Cinco de Mayo. This day marks the proud moment when Mexican soldiers threw back an invading army at the Battle of Puebla. One hundred and thirty-nine years later Cinco de Mayo pays tribute to the strong and independent spirit of the Mexican people.

We celebrated a little early at the White House this year, on *quatro de Mayo*, with a fiesta on the South Lawn, with the mariachi music, folkloric dancing, and an ample supply of Mexican food. For a little while, it was just like being in Texas again.

Growing up in Texas gave me many things I'm thankful for, and one of them is an appreciation of the Hispanic culture. In Texas, it's in the air you breath. Hispanic life, Hispanic culture, and Hispanic values are inseparable from the life of our State and have been for many generations. The history of Mexican-American relations has had its troubled moments, but today our peoples enrich each other in trade and culture and family ties.

To affirm that friendship, Laura and I have invited Mexican President Vicente Fox to be the guest of honor at the very first state dinner of my administration. President Fox is a fine man, a man of powerful ideals and a great vision for his country. We have already met three times this year. I consider him a friend. We are committed to working together in common purpose for the good of both countries. Whether the issue is free trade or energy production, environmental protection or the control of illegal drugs, our interests are often the same.

In the United States, I'm happy to say, we're putting old fears and quarrels behind us. We know that we must protect the integrity of our border, yet we understand how that border can be viewed from the other side, as the gateway to better wages and a

better life. I've often said that family values don't stop at the Rio Grande. The best way to have a stable border is better opportunity in both our nations, opportunity built by trade and education and freedom.

And when immigrants come to America legally, their culture and contribution must be treated with respect. They have an equal place in the American story, a story written in many hands and told in many languages. This welcoming spirit is the heritage of the immigrant Nation and the commitment of my administration.

Cinco de Mayo is a day for special pride and remembrance for all of Mexico. And for all Americans, it is a reminder of the heritage we share with our neighbor to the south and the great promise of the future.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 9 a.m. on May 4 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on May 5. The address was also recorded in Spanish. Both transcripts were made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 4 but were embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With Amir Hamad Khalifa of Bahrain

May 7, 2001

President Bush. It's my honor to welcome His Highness to America. Bahrain is a close friend of our country. It housed our 5th Fleet—strong allies. He has made a big difference in his own country, been on the leading edge of reform. He believes in human rights and believes in the full participation of the people of his land. And we're really grateful for your leadership. It's such an honor to welcome you here.

Amir Khalifa. Thank you. I am pleased to have this honor today to meet with the President, who has been promising from the day he wanted to be in this job. And I'm

sure America will do a great thing and move forward in all fields, for the stability and security, mainly, of my region, the Gulf region.

We have an old relationship that's lasted for more than a hundred-and-something years. And I think we will keep that one. And that's why I'm here, to consult on matters of security, on matters of trade, on matters of development. And I thank the President for his invitation, his kind invitation.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:05 p.m. in the Colonnade at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks to the Council of the Americas Conference

May 7, 2001

Thank you, Mr. Rhodes, I'm honored; and thank you for having me, sir. It's an honor to be here with Senator Chuck Hagel. He's a man who's got a good vision of the world. He's also a fine United States Senator, I might add. Thank you for being here, Senator. It's good to see Ambassadors from nations in our hemisphere. Mr. Rockefeller, thank you very much for your support of trade in our hemisphere.

It's an honor to be here with the best pick I could have possibly made to be the Secretary of State, and that's Colin Powell. He's doing a really good job of making the case for our country in a strong and humble way. When it's all said and done, his tenure is going to mean the world is more peaceful and more prosperous.

I appreciate so very much, Peter Romero from the State Department, who has been working side by side with those of us at the White House. I appreciate Thomas McNamara and Bill Pryce, as well. And thank you all for coming, and thank you for letting me talk about a subject near and dear to my heart.

The Council of the Americas was formed 36 years ago, in a different America. And it's certainly a different world. In 1965 international trade and investment mattered much less to the U.S. economy. We traded mostly with the countries of Europe. Inter-

estingly enough, at that point in time, Mexico was our fifth largest trading partner. Today, she's the second largest trading partner, behind Canada.

In 1965 so few Americans traced their ancestry to Latin America that the census didn't even bother to tabulate them. Today, some 35 million Americans are of Hispanic origin. In 1965 military and authoritarian regimes ruled all too many of the countries of the Americas. Today, with one sad, solitary exception, every nation in our hemisphere has an elected government.

Our recent summit in Quebec symbolized the new reality in our hemisphere, a unity of shared values, shared culture, and shared trade. And together, we made good progress at that summit, the beginnings of a really strong and fruitful relationship all throughout the hemisphere.

In 1980s and the early nineties, our Nation negotiated many important trade agreements: the U.S.-Canada Free Trade Agreement, the North American Free Trade Agreement, and the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade talks. Since then, efforts have stalled as U.S. trade promotion authority was allowed to lapse. The inactivity of the American Government has had real costs for the American people. The United States has few better friends, for example, than the Republic of Chile, but the fact is, Canadian goods sold in Chile pay a lower tariff than American goods do, because the United States has left its trade talks with Chile unfinished.

Free trade agreements are being negotiated all over the world, and we're not a party to them. And this has got to change.

Americans are the world's preeminent inventor of new technology and the world's biggest foreign investor. We're the world's most efficient food producer and the world's leading source of information and entertainment. For our farmers and our inventors, for our artists and for ordinary savers open trade pays off in the form of higher incomes and higher returns.

We benefit from open trade in less tangible ways, as well. Americans want to live on a cleaner planet; we want labor standards